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TAGS: TBIO KFLU ECON PREL SOCI CASC EAGR MX GM
SUBJECT: H1N1 UPDATE: 3,810 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 899, B) Berlin 894 and previous.

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The number of H1N1 infections in Germany rose by 461 cases to a total of 3,810 on July 28. The majority of new infections occurred abroad, mainly during travel to Spain. Information available to German companies on pandemic planning. RKI warns of "H1N1 parties". END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) At its July 28 press briefing, the National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) announced 461 new (laboratory and non-laboratory) confirmed cases of H1N1. This increases the total number of H1N1 cases to 3,810. New cases were distributed among the federal states: North Rhine-Westphalia (196), Lower-Saxony (114), Bavaria (47), Baden-Wuerttemberg (31), Berlin (17), Rhineland-Palatinate (10), Saxony (8), Schleswig-Holstein (7), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (7), Thuringia (7), Bremen (7), Hamburg (4) and Brandenburg (3) and Hesse (3).

¶3. (U) According to RKI, the increase in the number of infections is mainly due to people returning from travel abroad (384 new cases), with most of them reportedly infected while in Spain. Newly confirmed cases include laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1 as well as non-laboratory-confirmed cases, mainly from people who have showed symptoms after being in contact with a patient who has been tested positive at a lab for the new virus. So far, all cases are reportedly mild.

¶4. (U) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) remains the German state with the highest number of virus cases among all German states with a total of 1405 (37 percent of German cases), followed by Lower-Saxony (795) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (375 cases). Less than 24 percent (879) of all confirmed infections in Germany have resulted from domestic transmission.

Information Available to German companies on Pandemic Planning

¶5. (U) The Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) in cooperation with the health ministry of Baden-Wuerttemberg published a H1N1 handbook for German companies giving references to self protection, protection of employees and internal pandemic planning. Guided by check lists and background information, the handbook supports

companies in the development of company internal emergency action plans. (<http://www.bbk.bund.de>). As previously reported in Ref 884, some German companies are already preparing for the pandemic and taking precautionary measures to protect employees against the virus. The German Chamber of Commerce and Trade, IHK, has now called on all German companies to take actions and prepare for a flu outbreak and thus avoid a breakdown of the German economy.

RKI Warns of "H1N1 Parties"

¶ 6. (U) RKI vice president Reinhard Burger warned of so-called H1N1 parties where people gather together to purposely get infected with the new virus in the hope to build up an immunization for fall. He cautioned that everything speaks against that a mild course of the virus will guarantee an immunization against the new flu. Currently, RKI sees no need for panic. Despite an increase of a few hundred cases per day, there is still no mass spread of the virus in Germany yet, Burger said.

BRADTKE